

# Announcing Launch of Planet Texas 2050

This past October, I wrote to tell you that UT's first Bridging Barriers research grand challenge would be Planet Texas 2050.

**I'm proud to let you know that this week marks the program's official launch, and I'm even more delighted that the team already boasts more than 120 researchers from 14 different colleges, schools, and units across campus.**

This is exactly the kind of large-scale, interdisciplinary research President Fennes envisioned when he introduced the Bridging Barriers initiative a year and a half ago. Through Bridging Barriers, our university faculty and researchers will be tackling some of the hardest questions and most pressing social, environmental, and humanitarian crises of our time.

From this point forward, Planet Texas 2050 researchers will be gathering new data to better understand how urbanization and climate affect our natural resources and ecosystem services. Their discoveries will inform an eight-year sprint to find ways to make our state more resilient and better prepared in the face of weather extremes and rapid population growth. Their work will stretch across multiple disciplines – from geosciences and engineering to archeology, architecture, medicine, and more – and will help us accurately predict possible futures for our state.

Just as important, their methods and approach – what they learn and how they learn it – will have applications that extend beyond our region. The research team will share their findings, tools, and processes with researchers across the U.S. and the world who are facing similar challenges in the 21st century.

To find out more about Planet Texas 2050, I hope you will take time to visit our new website

dedicated to following these researchers as their work evolves. And as new grand challenges are launched, this site will grow to tell their stories as well.

If you're interested in participating in this or a future grand challenge initiative, [please let us know](#).

[Faculty members and researchers](#) from nearly every school or college are part of the Planet Texas 2050 team. I hope you'll take a moment to congratulate them for their commitment and encourage them as they contribute their unique expertise to such a bold endeavor. Today, more than ever, we're reminded that What Starts Here Changes the World.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jaffe  
Vice President for Research  
The University of Texas at Austin